Legislative Assembly Office

Serving Alberta

Speaker Kowalski is seen with James Alook and Chantel Alook from the Alexis First Nation's bow-shaping ceremony by the Legislature with the Forum for Young Albertans.

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

January 1, 2005

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

As required by Standing Order 109, I am pleased to submit the 17th annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office for the calendar year ending December 31, 2003, and the financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003. This report describes the activities of the Legislative Assembly Office focusing on four key areas of responsibility in which support is provided to Members. Also presented are the audited financial statements for the 2002-2003 fiscal year and the seventh annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

At the end of yet another successful year, the outstanding support to the Assembly that Legislative Assembly Office staff provide must be mentioned. Through hosting visiting parliamentarians and coordinating Assembly events, they serve the citizens of Alberta well. As Speaker I am proud to lead this group of dedicated professionals.

I would like to thank those Members who so ably represented Alberta or presented papers at various interparliamentary conferences, and I thank all MLAs for supporting the work of the Legislative Assembly Office and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Ken Kowalski, MLA

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Purpose Statement

Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly Office will:

1. Support the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of office.
2. Support Members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta.
3. Record the proceedings and maintain and preserve the records of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Inform and educate the public on behalf of Members and the institution of Parliament.
5. Support the Assembly in protecting its institutions and privileges.
6. Support the exchange of ideas/information among Legislatures throughout the world.
7. Provide services to external clients as required.

Strategic Goals

- Assist the Speaker in fulfilling the duties of office.
- Assist Members in carrying out their roles as legislators within the parliamentary system and as representatives of their constituencies.
- Meet and exceed the service expectations of the Members.
- Respond to increased demands for technology related services from Members, staff and the public.
- Provide Members with professional development opportunities and foster interparliamentary cooperation through participation in national and international parliamentary forums and exchange programs.
- Increase public awareness of the Legislative Assembly within Alberta's democratic parliamentary system through information and outreach programs.
- Continue to foster understanding of the division of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government.
- Ensure that the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) provides quality services in an increasingly competitive environment.
- Ensure the continued development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the LAO workforce through the fostering and recognition of leadership and teamwork.
- Develop plans for special centennial events and projects.

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

January 1, 2005

To The Honourable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta:

I am honoured to present to you the 17th annual report of the Legislative Assembly Office and the seventh annual report of the Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Legislative Assembly Office report includes the audited financial statements regarding the operation of the Legislative Assembly Office for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The Alberta Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association report outlines the various developmental opportunities afforded Members who attended interparliamentary conferences.

This Legislative Assembly Office report focuses on results-based reporting and includes highlights of events and conferences undertaken to further educate the public about the institution of parliament on behalf of Members as well as support an exchange of information and ideas among parliamentarians.

I am privileged to work with Legislative Assembly Office staff, who bring a high level of commitment, flexibility and professionalism to the work they do.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. W.J. David McNeil

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Assembly Office Organizational Chart

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An Introduction

The origins of Alberta's Legislative Assembly Office (LAO) can be traced to 14th century England, when Parliament elected the first Speaker and appointed the first Clerk. Today, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is the head of the LAO, and the Clerk is the Speaker's deputy. *The Legislative Assembly Act of 1983* made the LAO's current name official.

The most common misconception about the LAO is that it is a branch of government, and that its staff are government employees. However, in the parliamentary system, the government is the executive branch, responsible for applying and enforcing laws; the Legislative Assembly is the legislative branch, responsible for establishing those laws. The Legislative Assembly Office provides various types of support to the entire Assembly – both members of government and opposition parties.

Although the LAO is sometimes called the Speaker's department, it is not a government department. The Speaker does not belong to the cabinet and cannot be asked questions during Oral Question Period or participate in the Assembly's debates. However, the Speaker does have administrative authority and responsibility similar to that of a minister of a government department. The Clerk is the Speaker's chief administrative deputy and has authority and responsibility similar to that of a deputy minister.

The Speaker has two distinct but related roles. In the Assembly, the Speaker maintains order and ensures that MLAs conduct their business according to the Standing Orders of the Assembly. Administratively, the Speaker is responsible for the Assembly's records and provides services to MLAs and the public.

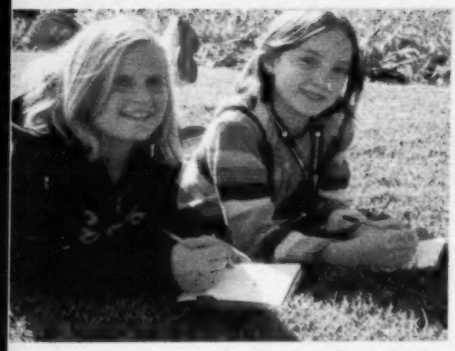
The latter include financial administration, human resources, office automation assistance, public education, library services, legal services, House services, purchasing and communications services.

The LAO as a whole has the same procedural and administrative roles. This is a unique characteristic and is evident throughout the office, particularly during session, when the normal duties, work hours and office locations of many staff change significantly.

The LAO's annual budget, as well as provisions for financial and human resource administration, are under the purview of the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services. As an all-party committee of the Assembly, the Members' Services Committee regulates constituency office support and Members' pay, allowances, benefits and group insurance plans, all of which the LAO administers. Traditionally, the Speaker chairs the Members' Services Committee.

Each party of elected members, or caucus, is a branch of the Legislative Assembly Office. Although the Speaker technically has authority over the administration of each caucus office, for obvious reasons these branches operate with considerable autonomy. Therefore, the caucus branches are not part of this report; it only includes branches of the LAO under the Speaker's full control. However, since the caucuses receive financial, administrative and human resource services, as well as other support from other branches of the LAO, this report does comment on those services. In addition, the office's consolidated budget estimates and audited financial statements, which appear at the end of this report, include caucus finances.

New Democrat Leader Dr. Raj Pannu and Senior Parliamentary Counsel Robert Reid respond to questions at question period session with students as part of the LAO's Page Program.



Services

Office of the Clerk

Is responsible for the processing of the daily business of the House and provides management and communications support to all branches of the LAO. The Clerk acts as a liaison at the deputy minister level with government departments and assists in coordinating Member participation in interparliamentary activities.

Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS)

Provides full accounting services such as budget preparation and monitoring, payment processing and financial reporting, as well as administrative services including equipment and supplies procurement, telecommunications management, constituency office lease and credit card administration.

Information Systems Services (ISS)

Handles all technological issues including installation and support of software and hardware, remote access and network infrastructure. ISS also assists with records management and handles responsibilities under the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*** for the LAO.

Human Resource Services (HRS)

Provides support to Members and staff in all matters of human resource management. This includes contract administration, pay and benefits management, recruitment and job classification, employee relations, training and development and all issues related to occupational health and safety.

Legal Services–Parliamentary Counsel

Provides legal advice on a wide range of matters including parliamentary procedure. They draft Private Members' Public Bills and Private Bills. Both Senior Parliamentary Counsel serve as Table Officers in the House and advise the Speaker on points of order and questions of privilege.

Library Services

Offers information, news, reference and research services to the Members and their staff using current library and information technology. As well, Library Services provides training in the use of the electronic services that are delivered to the Members' desktops.

Public Information and Reporting Services–Public Information Branch (PIB)

Is responsible for the recording and publication of print and electronic versions of ***Alberta Hansard***, the official report of proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and its committees. PIB also administers a subscription service to ***Alberta Hansard***, Votes and Proceedings and bills and distributes sessional publications as well as operates a public information service and provides editing and proofreading services.

Visitor, Ceremonial and Security Services (VCSS)

Plans and executes ceremonial and special events, as well as the coordination of school and public outreach programs, tours of the facilities and the production of several educational and orientation materials. Maintaining security in the Chamber and precincts, providing security-related advice to constituency offices and managing the Alberta Legislative Assembly Page Program are also the responsibility of VCSS.

House and Committee Services (HCS)

Along with providing advice on parliamentary procedures, producing the ***Votes and Proceedings***, ***Order Paper***, ***Journals*** and assisting in maintaining House records, such as bills and motions, HCS provides all the arrangements for the Assembly's Standing, Special Standing and Select Special Committee meetings. As well, HCS assists with expenses, budgets, historical records and transcripts relating to committees.

Key Responsibility Areas

The structure of this annual report highlights the accomplishments of the Legislative Assembly Office (LAO). All branch information has been integrated to emphasize how the branches work together to achieve common goals and support the mandate of the LAO.

The Mission of the LAO is to provide the best advice and a full range of quality services to Members, as parliamentarians and support the preservation of the Assembly's history and maintain its accessibility to the public. Performance of the Assembly must therefore be measured according to how well the LAO performs these tasks.

The Legislative Assembly Office has organized its results into four key responsibility areas (KRAs):

1. Provision of timely, professional, impartial, accurate information and advice to Members
2. Provision of services, equipment, supplies and facilities on a timely basis
3. Provision of an effective workplace to support Members
4. Provision of support to maintain and develop the parliamentary system in Alberta

A young Assembly Interpretive Centre visitor enjoys a visit to the Public Information Branch as part of School at the Legislature.

Key Responsibility Area 1

Provision of timely, professional, impartial, accurate information and advice to Members

Information

The various branches of the LAO worked together to provide information sessions to constituency office staff. This year, the spring session was held in Red Deer and topics such as interpersonal communications, records management, computer training and Workers Compensation Board Services were covered. The fall session, held in Edmonton, highlighted issues dealing with Library services, Legislature programs, searching *Hansard*, effective communications, House services and security.

In another joint effort, the Information Technology Management Committee, which consists of LAO management and caucus directors, began quarterly meetings to keep everyone up to date and establish information technology priorities.

The *National Post* was added to the Alberta Daily News (ADN) Service and *Ottawa Scan* was added to the Legislative Alert Services. As well, at the Annual Spring Tea, Speaker Kowalski announced on behalf of Library Services the addition of Canada Channel, *Canadian Almanac and Directory* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* to the online resources. Library Services also produced bibliographies covering current topics such as mad cow disease (BSE), freedom of information and privacy and public-private partnerships. An inventory of the weekly newspapers from Barrhead, Bruderheim, Cereal, Delia, Glendon, Manning, Mundare and Smoky River is complete, and the papers are now being microfilmed.

House and Committee Services (HCS) updated and circulated the *Practical Guide to Committees* to committee chairs and deputy chairs. As well, the Standing Orders of the Assembly and Members' Services Committee Orders were amended.

Advice

Parliamentary Counsel provided legal counsel and procedural advice to the Speaker, other presiding officers, Members and committees of the Assembly. As well, in cooperation with the Clerk Assistant and the Procedural Clerk, they reviewed amendments, Private Members' motions, motions for returns, written questions and petitions.

Security counsel to constituency offices, both over the phone and in person, was provided by Visitor, Ceremonial and Security Services (VCSS).

Human Resource Services (HRS) provided advice and assistance to Members in all aspects of HR functions including working closely with Members and Managers to assess performance issues and identify options and methods for problem resolution.

Key Responsibility Area 2

Provision of services, equipment, supplies and facilities on a timely basis

General Services

The fixed asset listings were consolidated by Information Systems Services (ISS). In addition, bar codes were introduced to identify components and facilitate accurate tracking.

During the 'Choice Point' in July 2003 HRS administered upgrades to the flexible benefit plans for Members and staff participating in the Members' Choice and First Choice plans. In addition, HRS partnered with Alberta Blue Cross to develop a brochure outlining Member coverage for dental and health benefits.

Recruitment and retention of an effective workforce remained a high priority. HRS staff screened over 940 resumés and interviewed 177 applicants for 29 competitions for salaried and sessional positions.

The Communications unit within the Clerk's Office performed a communications audit, which included both group meetings and individual interviews with management. Based on the information gathered during the audit, a broad-based communications plan was created to provide direction for the unit in meeting LAO needs. Several tracking systems for printing, advertising and budgeting were developed along with a project list and an action plan template to assist with project planning. The communications unit completed 175 projects during the course of 2003. Most of those projects involved assisting the branches of the LAO with promoting services, programs and events.

Parliamentary Counsel monitored legal actions affecting the Legislative Assembly and defended the interests of the Assembly as required. As well, they provided legal services to the Chief Electoral Officer, drafted 18 Private Members' Public Bills and reviewed an array of contracts and agreements dealing with licensing, leasing, employment and fee for service.

House and Committee Services (HCS) provided procedural research and support to the House and other Table Officers

as well as Assembly Standing Committees, the Special Standing Committee and the Ethics Commissioner and Ombudsman Select Special Search Committee. Budget requirement preparation and committee expenditure reconciliation were also handled by HCS along with the production of the Order Paper and Votes and Proceedings, *Journals* and maintenance of House and committee records for historical purposes. Also under the purview of HCS was the timely preparation of scripts for daily session and ceremonies.

Online Services

In collaboration with ISS, HRS initiated a review of online pension reporting processes to facilitate the move from manual to online submission of pension-related documents and premiums.

The Alberta Electronic Government Document Archive has been expanded to include 1,069 titles. This archive is accessible through the Library Services' online catalogue, which was also upgraded in 2003. At the fall information session, Library Services officially launched its Scrapbook *Hansard* online. The digitized newspaper articles provide accounts of the proceedings during Alberta's first Legislature. Plans to complete the digitization for the second through fifth Legislatures by 2005 are in place.

Online congratulatory scroll request services have been enhanced to allow the ordering of all provincial scrolls with the click of a mouse. This service was a joint venture between Public Information Branch (PIB) and ISS and will be available for use in January 2004.

The reservation system for the Chamber has been automated to allow Legislative Assembly Security Services access to all reservation lists compiled through Visitor Services and calculate seating availability in the Public Galleries instantly. This initiative by VCSS and ISS will also allow for more accurate and timely statistics.

Online ordering of stationery and an online personal expense claim form were set up by Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS). As well, online claim forms for MLA temporary residence allowances, MLA transportation allowances and the online supplies ordering system were updated.

Redesign of the Assembly documents and records pages to facilitate easier navigation was made possible due to the collaboration of HCS, PIB and ISS. As well, the ISYS help pages were reformatted to make searching easier. All *Hansard* documents for 2003 are now available in PDF format online.

Systems and Equipment

The audio system was upgraded by ISS to allow for digital recording of Chamber audio. This will increase the accuracy and efficiency of House records by making audio cassettes, used by PIB to produce *Hansard*, unnecessary. Also, the introduction of video streaming of Oral Question Period allows the public to now view the proceedings online.

The Point of Sale (POS) System in the Legislative Assembly Gift Shop was enhanced and the migration of telephone lines, equipment, services and billing from Telus to Bell was successfully completed by FMAS.

HCS began updating the data bank of decisions by the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services, and Financial Management and Administrative Services (FMAS) updated and enhanced the database for and reporting of MLA fuel purchases and kilometres claimed.

Facilities

VCSS provided Member and spectator security in the galleries during session and site preparations for events held in and around the Legislature, pedway and Interpretive Centre.

Key Responsibility Area 3

Provision of an effective workplace to support Members

Policy

In order to foster the continued cooperation of branches and support an atmosphere of teamwork, in 2003 several multi-branch committees were struck. These committees were created to resolve issues relating to the vision and mission of the organization, security screening and uniform policies.

New job descriptions reflecting the LAO's emphasis on measuring performance were developed by HRS. Health and safety were priorities. HRS coordinated a flu shot program and handwashing campaign. As well safety by prevention was supported through the ergonomic program. Library Services worked with HRS to plan for improved ergonomic workstations for library staff in the Legislature Building.

VCSS continued involvement on the Security Coordination Committee to discuss and coordinate security issues related

to the Legislature Building and surrounding areas. This committee is a joint effort of the LAO, the Alberta Solicitor General and Alberta Infrastructure.

Skill Development

Support for skill development and learning continued with over 40 staff attending various courses and seminars offered through HRS. In addition, 70 employees received first aid training.

Community Initiatives

The LAO supported Alberta's beef industry by providing employees access to the Great Canadian Cattle Drive, in which HRS organized advance payment for the purchase of beef products.

The Legislative Assembly Office was proud to again participate in activities to support the community through the United Way. In 2003, several exciting and creative ideas were initiated to raise money, but one idea—a swimsuit calendar project—stands out. In this initiative staff members from both the LAO and constituency offices, as well as Members of the Assembly, dressed up in period bathing costumes and posed against the majestic backdrop of the Legislature grounds. This initiative earned a nomination for a United Way Spirit award.

Approximately 20 staff members from various branches of the LAO participated in the CIBC Run for the Cure. The "Dometrotters" ran or walked to raise money for breast cancer research.

Key Responsibility Area 4

Provision of support to maintain and develop the parliamentary system in Alberta

Events

Various branches of the LAO worked together to plan, organize, promote and execute several events held on the grounds, within the pedway and also in the Chamber of the Legislature Building. In addition, two new exhibits were displayed in the Interpretive Centre to portray the history behind the roles of the Speaker of the Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor.

Outreach

HCS and HRS conducted final interviews on behalf of the House of Commons Page Program. Our own Page Program attracted 22 applicants to fill seven positions. The Page Program provides high school students with opportunities for self development and promotes involvement by Alberta's youth in the parliamentary system.

All branches of the LAO as well as Members of the Assembly and their staff have taken active roles in supporting and participating in the School-at-the-Legislature program. In 2003, 673 students participated in the week-long program.

A new outreach program called MLA for a Day was developed in 2003 to provide high school students with insight into a typical day for an MLA. Highlights of the program include one-on-one time with their respective MLA, a mock debate, information sessions with representatives from each caucus, staff from the press gallery and the LAO, and observation of Oral Question Period.

Publications

Several documents were created in 2003 to educate the public and promote the parliamentary system in Alberta. Both the *English as a Second Language Field Trip Guide* and a comprehensive brochure entitled *Open for You to Discover*, produced to promote all LAO programs and services, were joint ventures between VCSS and the communications unit.

Parliamentary Counsel continued their participation as the Alberta correspondents for the *Canadian Parliamentary Review* and, in collaboration with HCS, the *Table Review*, and VCSS produced the Fifth annual Sergeant-at-Arms newsletter to be distributed throughout Canada and the Commonwealth.

Associations

The LAO is actively involved in national and international associations that not only support and maintain the parliamentary system in Alberta but also provide the opportunity for skill development and contact with peers.

Library Services began planning to host the 2004 Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Canada (APLIC) Conference to be held, for the first time in over 20 years, in Alberta next year. As well, PIB has received acceptance of their invitation to the Hansard Association of Canada and the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association to hold their combined conference in Edmonton in 2005.

House and Committee Services Comparative Statistics

	2003 *Third Session* *25th Legislature*	**2002** *Second Session* *25th Legislature*	**2001** *First Session* *25th Legislature*
Day Sittings (Hours)			
Spring	*46 (256)*	*37 (206)*	*25 (91)*
Fall	*10 (65)*	*10 (50)*	*11 (41)*
Evening Sittings (Hours)			
Spring	*31 (87)*	*26 (67)*	*17 (61)*
Fall	*8 (25)*	*6 (14)*	*8 (13)*
Government Bills			
Introduced	*57*	*39*	*31*
Received Royal Assent	*55*	*37*	*31*
Private Bills			
Introduced	*2*	*1*	*4*
Received Royal Assent	*2*	*1*	*4*
Private Members' Public Bills			
Introduced	*18*	*16*	*16*
Received Royal Assent	*5*	*4*	*3*
Government Motions			
Debated	*28*	*34*	*22*
Agreed to	*24*	*31*	*21*
Withdrawn	*0*	*0*	*0*
Private Members' Motions			
Placed on Order Paper	*64*	*54*	*52*
Accepted	*9*	*6*	*6*
Rejected	*2*	*4*	*2*
Withdrawn	*1*	*0*	*0*
Written Questions			
Placed on Order Paper	*32*	*9*	*1*
Accepted	*14*	*6*	*2*
Rejected	*1*	*3*	*4*
Withdrawn	*0*	*0*	*0*
Motions for Returns			
Placed on Order Paper	*35*	*9*	*18*
Accepted	*7*	*5*	*2*
Rejected	*7*	*4*	*15*
Withdrawn	*0*	*0*	*0*

House and Committee Services Comparative Statistics (continued)

	2003 Third Session 25th Legislature	2002 Second Session 25th Legislature	2001 First Session 25th Legislature
Committee of Supply (Days)			
Main Estimates	15	16	15
Lottery Fund	N/A	N/A	1
Supplementary	2	2	2
Tablings	919	755	613
Petitions (Excluding Private Bills)			
Presented	67	62	42
Read and Received	N/A	N/A	23
Recognitions	187	154	110
Members' Statements	119	100	71
Ministerial Statements	12	13	5
Pages Published			
Journals	664	540	473
Votes and Proceedings	422	354	312
Order Paper	465	352	411

House and Committee Services Comparative Statistics (continued)

Committee Name	Number of Meetings
Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund	4
Standing Committee on Legislative Offices	4
Special Standing Committee on Members' Services	2
Standing Committee on Private Bills	2
Standing Committee on Public Accounts	14
Select Special Ethics Commissioner and Ombudsman Search Committee	10

Information Systems Services Comparative Statistics

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Equipment In Place				
Constituency Work Stations	140	138	109	106
Constituency Printers	135	132	120	124
LAN Work Stations	195	229	188	173
LAN Laser Printers	50	50	45	45
Printers (Not Networked)	105	101	n/a	n/a
Servers	19	17	16	18
Scanners	42	41	22	18
Laptop Computers	170	158	143	98
Equipment Replaced				
Obsolete Work Stations	86	81	190	45
Obsolete Laser Printers	20	19	20	16
Obsolete Laptop Computers	31	9	30	0
Training				
Training Days[1]	84	75	118	34
Regular Training	11	57	n/a	n/a
ISS Staff Technical Training	23	18	n/a	n/a
Help Desk Calls				
Help Calls Logged	1,975	1,857	1,610	1,500

[1] Regular vs. technical training statistics only available since 2002.

Financial Management and Administrative Services
Comparative Statistics

	2003	2002	2001
Administrative:			
Constituency Offices, Moved	1	3	20
Constituency Offices, New	0	0	0
Constituency Offices, Closed	1	0	0
Leases Processed (New or Renewals)	11	18	46
Telecommunications Services Installed or Moved	5	30	71
Telecommunications Services Requests	150	219	406
Direct Purchase Orders Issued	90	115	120
MLA Purchase Orders Processed	5,530	5,600	5,400
Other Requests Processed	3,344	3,016	2,670
Special Requests Processed	265	280	320
Supplies Orders Processed			
Online Ordering System	754	679	n/a
Manual	253	229	n/a
Financial*:			
Invoices Coded and Data Entered	17,676	16,003	18,142
Payments Issued	10,985	10,504	10,834

* Note: Financial statistics are now based on the fiscal year. 2003 represents April 1, 2002, to March 31, 2003.

Visitor, Ceremonial and Security Services Comparative Statistics

	2003	2002	2001
Visitors to Legislature and Interpretive Centre			
Visitors on Tour	41,700	38,936	41,273
Special Events	54,457	65,602	50,573
Casual	32,035	30,022	32,496
Total Visitors	137,896	143,963	130,772
Tours and Programs			
Regular Tours	2765	2,623	2,846
VIP Tours	20	18	10
Educational Programs	476	344	492
Public Service Orientation Tours	41	40	2
Gallery Seats Reserved	8,505	6,674	5,572
Volunteer Hours	N/A	84	273
Gift Shop Sales	$89,865	$99,473	$97,015
MLA Sales	$245,408	$251,757	$220,466

Library Services Comparative Statistics

	2003	2002	2001
Total Number of Volumes in the Collection	381,616	358,273	334,407
Items Borrowed for use Outside the Library	5,025	4,484	4,567
Items Used On-site	7,848	6,021	3,472
Number of Sessional Papers Added to the Collection	919	755	613
Number of Requests Requiring Less than 15 Minutes to Complete	3,228	3,490	4,284
Number of Requests Requiring 15 Minutes to One Hour to Complete	801	834	663
Number of Requests Requiring More Than One Hour to Complete	247	151	102
MLA/LAO Usage of the Library's Internet Site	22,885	19,974	12,457
Number of Times the Online Catalogue was Accessed Remotely	184,330*	144,568*	8,019
Number of Inter-library Loan Requests from Members and Staff	376	123	275

*The 2002 and 2003 figures include the number of searches of the Legislature Library's holdings accessed through The Alberta Library catalogue.

Public Information Branch Comparative Statistics

	2003	2002
Public Information and Subscriptions		
Public Information Calls	6,585	6,559
Congratulatory Scrolls	2,388	2,586
Paid Subscriptions		
Daily Hansard	95	118
Hansard Bound Volumes	31	33
Bills, Votes	240	245
Journals	240	245
Complimentary Issues		
Daily Hansard	330	335
Hansard Bound Volumes	104	101
Bills, Votes	425	425
Order Paper	371	379
Hansard Index and Online Inquiries	41	39
Web site Inquiries	87	51
Hansard Statistics		
Hansard Pages	2,104	1,724
Standing and Special Committees		
Meetings Reported	28	37
Meeting Hours	35	79
Transcript Pages	278	626
Electoral Boundaries Commission		
Meetings Reported	-	19
Meeting Hours	-	57
Transcript Pages	-	408
Total Hansard and Committee Transcript Pages	2,382	2,758
Miscellaneous		
Speaker Interviews (Library Project)	19	
Interviews Reported	6	
Interview Hours	47	
Transcript Pages		
Speech Reprints Issued	236	145
Users of Hansard Display in Interpretive Centre		
Number of Quizzes Taken	828	665
Number of Transcriptions Done	940	650

Estimates Chart

	2002–2003	2001–2002
Human Resource Expenses		
Earnings*	$7,655,000	$7,463,500
Employer Contributions	1,451,000	1,278,700
Allowances and Supplementary Benefits	204,500	187,500
Subtotal	9,310,500	8,929,700
Operational Expenses		
Travel	2,039,500	1,970,000
Advertising	137,000	176,000
Insurance	151,500	147,500
Postage and Freight	159,600	153,600
Office Equipment Rental/Purchase	961,000	929,100
Telecommunications	812,800	802,600
Equipment Repairs and Maintenance	75,000	71,000
Other Labour and Services	970,000	1,364,000
Data Processing Equipment and Services	822,000	804,000
Hosting	151,000	142,000
Other Administration/Supplies	1,149,100	841,500
Rentals	4,000	4,000
Subtotal	7,432,500	7,405,300
Grants	3,000	3,000
Payments to Members of the Legislative Assembly	8,889,000	8,661,000
Members' Services Allowances		
Constituency Office Allowances	4,300,000	4,206,000
Communication Allowances	1,218,000	1,192,000
Promotion Allowances	336,000	$333,000
Subtotal	5,854,000	5,731,000
Revenues		
Fees and Permits	1,000	1,000
Other Revenue	448,000	169,000
Subtotal	(449,000)	(170,000)
Fiscal Pressure Contingency	607,000	0
Election Contingency	0	0
Transition Allowance	4,200,000	4,200,000
Subtotal	4,807,000	4,200,000
Total	$35,847,000	$34,760,000

* Previously broken out into management and non-management; no longer presented in that manner in the LAO Estimates materials.

Former Members

Archibald D. (Dick) Johnston

March 5, 1940 – June 25, 2003

Mr. Johnston was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in March 1975 and served the constituency of Lethbridge-East for the Progressive Conservative Party.

During his service, Mr. Johnston served under the following portfolios: Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Advanced Education, Provincial Treasurer and Minister Responsible for Financial Institutions, including trust companies, credit unions and insurance companies. Mr. Johnston also served on the Select Standing Committees on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, Public Affairs and Public Accounts.

Gordon Taylor

July 20, 1910 – July 26, 2003

Originally under the Social Credit Party platform, on March 21, 1940, Mr. Taylor was elected to represent the Drumheller constituency. In 1975, he was re-elected in the same riding as an Independent in support of Peter Lougheed. He was the minister responsible for the following portfolios: Railways and Telephones, Highways and Transport, and Youth.

Mr. Taylor served on the Select Standing Committees on Agriculture, Colonization, Immigration and Education; Law and Regulations; Municipal Law; Private Bills; Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; Public Accounts; Public Affairs; Railways, Telephones and Irrigation; and the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act.

He also served on the Special Committees of Automobile Insurance, Redistribution Procedure and Workers' Compensation.

Mr. Taylor was a Member of Parliament for Bow River from 1979 to 1984.

Lewis Mitchell (Mickey) Clark

November 26, 1923 – September 10, 2003

Mr. Clark was first elected as a Member for the Progressive Conservative Party in the constituency of Drumheller on March 14, 1979, and served until 1986.

He served on the Select Standing Committees on Law and Regulations, Private Bills, Public Accounts and Public Affairs.

Richard Herbert (Herb) Jamieson

April 19, 1912 – September 15, 2003

Mr. Jamieson was elected June 18, 1959, and served until May 9, 1963. During his years of service, he represented the constituency of Jasper West for the Social Credit Party.

He served on the Select Standing Committees on Agriculture, Colonization, Immigration and Education; Municipal Law; Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing; and Railways, Telephones and Irrigation.

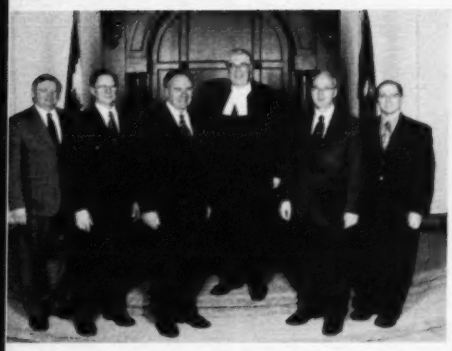
John McInnis

October 19, 1950 – November 26, 2003

Mr McInnis was first elected to the Alberta Legislature in the general election of March 20, 1989, representing the New Democrat Party of the constituency of Edmonton Jasper Place.

During his service, Mr. McInnis served on the Select Standing Committees on Members' Services; Public Affairs; and the Special Committee on Constitutional Reform.

His Excellency Ki Ho Chang, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Legislative Assembly Members



Financial Statements

As at March 3, 2003

Auditor's Report
Statement of Financial Position
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AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

I have audited the statement of financial position of the Legislative Assembly Office at March 31, 2003 and the statements of operations, cash flows and changes in net liabilities for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Office's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Legislative Assembly Office as at March 31, 2003 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

FCA
Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
July 4, 2003

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	$6,519	$6,469
Prepaid expenses	67,718	21,038
Accounts receivable and advances	335,125	363,835
Inventory held for resale	234,153	239,665
	643,515	631,007
Capital assets (Note 4)	1,286,279	1,126,152
	$1,929,794	$1,757,159
Liabilities & net liabilities		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$1,240,680	$1,052,807
Members' transition allowance (Note 6)	14,139,947	11,714,289
Vacation pay	755,127	705,992
	14,895,074	12,420,281
Net liabilities	(14,205,960)	(11,715,929)
	$1,929,794	$1,757,159

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Net Liabilities

For the year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Net liabilities at beginning of year	$(11,715,929)	$(4,779,669)
Net operating results	(30,688,761)	(33,609,136)
Net transfer from general revenues	28,198,730	26,672,876
Net liabilities at end of year	$(14,205,960)	$(11,715,929)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31, 2003

	2003 Budget	2003 Actual	2002 Actual
	(Note 8)		
Revenues			
Gift shop sales, services, and fees	$170,000	$420,181	$287,607
Other		144,967	12,071
Contribution from Alberta Infrastructure for accommodations costs provided at no charge (Note 5)		622,040	1,286,882
	170,000	1,187,188	1,586,560
Expenses			
Voted:			
Electoral boundaries commission	500,000	442,120	
Financial management and administrative services	487,000	487,463	464,419
Government Members' services	2,544,000	1,984,583	1,990,392
House services	2,880,000	2,919,941	2,674,041
Human resource services	642,000	594,990	511,274
Information systems	1,851,000	2,128,103	2,274,788
Legislative committees	260,000	207,220	150,365
Legislature Library	1,379,000	1,381,766	1,202,914
MLA administration	21,825,000	20,558,814	19,397,905
New Democrat Opposition services	287,000	296,239	289,757
Office of the Speaker	354,000	357,005	331,278
Official Opposition services	791,000	795,055	765,287
Public Information Branch	1,077,000	802,678	838,444
Vacant electoral division	53,000		
	$34,930,000	32,955,977	30,890,864
Valuation adjustments:			
Accommodation costs (Note 5)		622,040	1,286,882
Capitalization of assets expensed as supplies (Note 3b)		(1,270,489)	(1,429,608)
Amortization of capital assets (Note 3b)		1,110,361	1,067,478
Provision for (reduction in) members' transition allowance (Note 6)		(1,549,908)	3,277,375
Provision for vacation pay		49,135	53,979
Lease payments expensed (capitalized)		(46,680)	58,962
Net consumption of (increase in) inventory		5,513	(10,236)
		(1,080,028)	4,304,832
		31,875,949	35,195,696
Net operating results		$(30,688,761)	$(33,609,136)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002
Operating transactions:		
Net operating results	$ (30,688,761)	$ (33,609,136)
Add non cash charges:		
Amortization of capital assets	1,110,362	1,067,478
Increase in vacation pay	49,135	73,979
(Increase) decrease in prepaid lease expenses	(46,680)	58,962
Decrease (increase) in accounts receivable and advances	28,710	(159,381)
Decrease (increase) in inventory	5,512	(10,236)
Increase in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	187,873	335,842
Increase in transition allowance	2,425,658	7,000,974
Cash used by operating transactions	(26,928,191)	(25,241,518)
Investing transactions:		
Acquisition of capital assets	(1,270,489)	(1,429,608)
Financing transactions:		
Net transfer from general revenues	28,198,730	26,672,876
Net cash provided	50	1,750
Cash, beginning of year	6,469	4,719
Cash, end of year	$ 6,519	$ 6,469

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended March 31, 2003

Note 1 Authority

The Legislative Assembly Office (the "Office") is operated under the authority of the Legislative Assembly Act. Annual operating budgets are approved by the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

Note 2 Purpose

Within the traditions of parliamentary democracy as constitutionally established in Alberta, the Legislative Assembly Office will:

1. Support the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in carrying out the duties of the office.
2. Support Members in carrying out their roles as elected representatives of the people of Alberta.
3. Record the proceedings and maintain and preserve the records of the Legislative Assembly.
4. Inform and educate the public on behalf of Members and the institution of Parliament.
5. Support the Assembly in protecting its institutions and privileges.
6. Support the exchange of ideas and information among Legislatures throughout the world.
7. Provide services to external clients as required.

Note 3 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and Reporting Practices

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles:

a) Reporting Entity

The reporting entity is the Legislative Assembly Office, for which the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is responsible.

The Office operates within the General Revenue Fund (the "Fund"). The Fund is administrated by the Minister of Finance. All receipts of the Office are deposited into the Fund and all disbursements made by the Office are paid from the Fund. The net transfer from the General Revenues is the difference between all cash receipts and all cash disbursements made.

b) Basis of Financial Reporting

Revenues

All revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting.

Expenses

Expenses represent the costs of resources consumed during the year on the Office's operations.

Valuation Adjustments

Valuation adjustments include changes in the valuation allowances used to reflect assets at their net recoverable or other appropriate value. Valuation adjustments also represent the change in management's estimate of future payments arising from obligations relating to vacation pay and transition allowance. Furthermore, accommodation costs, provided by Alberta Infrastructure at no cost, are included in valuation adjustments so as to show the entire cost of the operation of the Office.

Assets

Financial assets of the Office are limited to financial claims such as cash, advances to and accounts receivable from other organizations, employers and other individuals.

Inventory held for resale is reported at the lower of cost and net realizable value.

Capital assets of the Office are recorded at historical cost and amortized on a straight-line basis, over the estimated useful lives of the assets, invoiced at $2,500 or greater, as follows:

Computer hardware and software	2 years
Office equipment	5 years
Furniture	10 years

The Office follows government budgetary practices that allow funds from an operating budget to be used to purchase capital assets. These purchases are included in expenses on the statement of operations, but are then removed from expenses through a valuation adjustment and are capitalized and amortized over their useful lives.

The fair value of cash and accounts receivable and advances are estimated to approximate their book values.

Liabilities
Liabilities include all financial claims payable by the Office at fiscal year end.

The Members' transition allowance is estimated based on Members' years of service and their most recent remuneration amounts. The annual charge is the amount that is estimated to have been earned by Members during the year.

The fair values of accounts payable and accrued liabilities, vacation pay, and Members' transition allowance are estimated to approximate their book values.

Net Liabilities
Net liabilities represent the difference between the value of assets held by the Office and its liabilities.

Note 4 Capital Assets

	2003			2002
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Office Equipment	$136,150	$59,780	$76,370	$47,887
Furniture	1,028,986	238,133	790,853	517,087
Computer hardware and software	4,089,047	3,669,991	419,056	561,178
	$5,254,183	$3,967,904	$1,286,279	$1,126,152

Note 5 Contribution from Alberta Infrastructure

Included in the $622,040 contribution from Alberta Infrastructure is $61,620 for renovations to the Office's space in the Legislature Annex, and $52,505 for an upgrade to the Legislature intercom system.

Note 6 Members' Transition Allowance

The Office implemented a Members' transition allowance on October 1, 1998. The provisions of the allowance were established in accordance with the Members' Allowances Order (RMSC 1992, c. M-1, as amended, Section 9.)

A transition allowance is paid to every Member at the time of dissolution of the Legislature unless they are re-elected in the next election. Members who resign their seats are also eligible for the allowance.

Under section 9, the amount paid for service commencing on or after March 20, 1989, is determined by multiplying three months' salary, based on the average monthly salary for the three calendar years in which the person received their highest salary, by the number of years the person served as a Member on or after March 20, 1989. "Salary" includes the MLA indemnity and expense allowance and remuneration for a Member of Executive Council, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairman of Committees, the Leader of the Official Opposition, the leader of a recognized opposition party, or a Member holding a position described in section 3(2) of the Members' Allowances Order (RMSC 1992, c. M-1, as amended) For service periods prior to March 20, 1989, the allowance is calculated by multiplying the highest rate of a Member's monthly indemnity and expense allowances, for one month for every year of service prior to March 20, 1989 with no year restrictions. There is

no credit for years of service where the Member has previously received a payment under Section 9 or the predecessor section. Eligible recipients may elect to be paid the allowance over a period of up to four years.

In the event of death of an active Member, a transition allowance equivalent to the amount owed at passing is paid to the Member's estate.

A portion of the increase in the liability is treated as a voted expense as directed by Alberta Finance. This voted expense component is equal to the amount approved by the Members' Services Committee. The difference in the change in the liability and the amount treated as a voted expense is a valuation adjustment. As a result, $4,200,000 has been treated as a voted expense for this fiscal period.

Note 7 Defined Benefit Plans

The Office participates in the following multi-employer pension plans: Management Employees Pension Plan and Public Service Pension Plan. The Office also participates in the multi-employer Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers established by the government effective July 1, 1999. The expense for these pension plans is equivalent to the annual contributions of $418,278 for the year ending March 31, 2003 (2002 - $367,337).

At December 31, 2002, the Management Employees Pension Plan reported a deficiency of $301,968,000 (2001 – surplus of $5,338,000) and the Public Service Pension Plan reported an actuarial deficiency of $175,528,000 (2001– actuarial surplus of $320,487,000). At December 31, 2002, the Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers had an actuarial surplus of $6,472,000 (2001– actuarial deficiency $399,000).

The Office also participates in a multi-employer Long Term Disability Continuance Plan. At March 31, 2003, the Management, Opted Out and Excluded Plan reported an actuarial deficiency of $3,053,000 (2001– actuarial deficiency of $2,656,000). The expense for this plan is limited to employer's annual contributions for the year.

Note 8 Budget

Expenses:	
2002-2003 budget [a]	*$ 34,930,000*
2002-2003 actual expenses (excluding valuation adjustments)	*(32,955,977)*
2002-2003 unexpended (excluding valuation adjustments)	*$1,974,023*

[a] *Office of the Legislative Assembly Estimates released on March 19, 2002.*

Note 9 Approval of Financial Statements

These financial statements were approved by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Schedule 1 – Expenses Detailed by Object

For the year ended March 31, 2003

	2003		2002
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Expenses:			
Salaries, wages and employer contributions	$ 8,839,115	$ 11,408,941	$ 10,530,020
Supplies and services	13,228,285	9,400,175	8,649,386
Grants	3,000	775	-
Payments to MLAs and Executive Council	12,859,600	12,146,086	11,711,458
Total expenses	$ 34,930,000	$ 32,955,977	$ 30,890,864

Schedule 2 – Salary and Benefits Disclosure

For the year ended March 31, 2003

	2003			2002
	Salary[1]	Benefits & Allowances [2]	Total	Total
Senior official				
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly [3]	$146,164 [4]	$40,569	$186,733	$191,842
Senior Management Team				
Senior Financial Officer	98,338 [4]	19,399	117,737	112,047
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	105,678 [4]	22,472	128,150	119,201
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	99,547	19,992	119,539	110,289
Director, Human Resource Services	90,401 [4]	15,981	106,382	89,941
Legislature Librarian	80,886 [4]	14,446	95,332	78,835
Clerk Assistant	85,644 [4]	15,399	101,043	86,179
Director of Visitor, Ceremonial, & Security Services and Sergeant-At-Arms	85,644 [4]	15,411	101,055	85,092
Manager Sub-total	646,138	123,100	769,238	681,584
	$792,302	$163,669	$955,971	$873,426

[1] Salary includes regular base pay, bonuses, and lump sum payments.

[2] Benefits and allowances include the Legislative Assembly Office's share of all employee benefits and contributions made on behalf of employees including pension, health care, dental coverage, group life insurance, short- and long-term disability plans and WCB premiums.

[3] Automobile is provided; no dollar amount included in benefits and allowances figures.

[4] Includes the following vacation payouts: Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Nil (2002–$4,787); Senior Financial Officer Nil (2002–$3,418); Senior Parliamentary Counsel Nil (2002–$735); Director Human Resource Services Nil (2002–$2,747); Legislature Librarian Nil (2002–$1,305); Clerk Assistant Nil (2002–$2,626); Director of Visitor, Ceremonial & Security Services and Sergeant-At-Arms Nil (2002–$2,591).

Special Events

Family Day

On February 17, the Legislature pedway was full of family activities and entertainment. Highlights of the event were a children's carnival, a traveling zoo, hot chocolate and Legislature tours. Over 2,400 visitors attended the event.

Eid-ul-Adha

On February 24, a celebration to recognize the Muslim festival of Eid-ul-Adha was held in the Legislature Rotunda. This festival celebrates the end of the annual pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca. The Ismaili Council for Edmonton made a presentation on behalf of Muslims in Edmonton to the Family Centre.

Mr. Speaker's MLA for a Day Launch

The Legislative Assembly launched a new program that provides an in-depth look into a typical day in the life of a Member of the Legislative Assembly. The program ran March 13 and April 10 and attracted a total of 70 high school students representing their respective constituencies. During their stay at the Legislature the students participated in meetings with their MLAs, briefing sessions and a mock debate and observed Oral Question Period.

Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie

On March 19, in celebration of La Semaine de la Francophonie, Speaker Kowalski hosted a ceremony to recognize l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta. Members representing each caucus as well as members of the Francophone community attended.

Ethics Commissioner and Ombudsman Farewell

On March 31, Speaker Kowalski hosted a farewell reception in honour of Ethics Commissioner Bob Clark and Ombudsman Scott Sutton. Colleagues, family and friends gathered in the Committee Room Lounge.

Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair

On May 9 and 10, the Eighth annual Edmonton Regional Heritage Fair was hosted in the Legislature pedway. Almost 200 projects created by 332 students in Grades 4 to 9 were on display in a celebration of Canadian heritage.

Library Annual Spring Tea

Speaker Kowalski, along with several Members of the Assembly and LAO employees, attended the Legislature Library's 5th Annual Spring Tea on May 6.

Provincial Page Speech Competition

The ninth annual Provincial Page Speech Competition, sponsored by TransAlta, was held on May 16. Deputy Speaker Don Tannas judged the competition along with representatives from TransAlta and the coordinator of the Alberta Debate and Speech Association. The winners were announced at a luncheon hosted by Speaker Kowalski on June 10. The winners were Paul Groch, first place; Lara Kinkartz, second place; and Maya Gordon, third place.

Order of St. John Investiture

The St. John Ambulance, Alberta Council held their Order of St. John Investiture Ceremony in the Legislature Chamber on June 13.

Ethics Commissioner Appointment

Speaker Kowalski hosted a swearing-in ceremony on June 23 for Don Hamilton as Alberta's second Ethics Commissioner. Colleagues, friends and family attended the ceremony in the Carillon Room. Mr. Hamilton's appointment became effective May 28.

Canada Day

On Canada Day the floor of the Legislature Chamber was open to the public. The event attracted over 18,000 visitors to the grounds and featured a 21-gun salute, a military display, the ERTC Criterium bicycle race, a children's carnival and entertainment.

Speaker's Cup

The 16th Annual Speaker's Cup was held at the Westlock Golf Club on Thursday, August 28. The Speaker hosted the event, which attracted 130 golfers and another 50 guests and volunteers for the dinner reception.

Ombudsman Appointment

On October 20, Speaker Kowalski hosted a swearing-in ceremony for G.B. (Gord) Button as Alberta's seventh Ombudsman. Colleagues, friends and family gathered in the Carillon Room. Mr. Button's appointment became effective September 15.

Police and Peace Officers' Memorial

On September 28, The Honourable Lieutenant Governor, Lois Hole, Deputy Chair of Committees Shiraz Shariff and the Sergeant-at-Arms were present at a ceremony to honour Alberta police and peace officers who have died in the line of duty.

Poppy Presentation

The Royal Canadian Legion launched its national poppy campaign at the Alberta Legislature on October 29. The Alberta-Northwest Territories Command presented poppies to Her Honour the Honourable Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor; Premier Ralph Klein; Speaker Ken Kowalski; Official Opposition representative Bill Bonner, MLA Glengarry; Leader of the Third Party Opposition Dr. Raj Pannu; and other attending MLAs.

Remembrance Service

On November 6, Speaker Kowalski, along with Deputy Premier Shirley McClellan, Opposition Leader Dr. Ken Nicol and New Democrat Brian Mason, MLA Edmonton-Highlands, laid wreaths in the Legislature Rotunda in memory of Albertans who gave their lives to the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and many peacekeeping missions. The Royal Canadian Legion, the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees and the Youth of Alberta also laid wreaths.

Employee Recognition Dinner

Speaker Kowalski hosted the annual Legislative Assembly Office and Constituency Office staff recognition dinner on December 4 to celebrate the year's accomplishments. Awards were presented to staff with 5, 10, 15, and 25 years of service. Eighteen constituency employees and 22 Legislative Assembly Office employees received awards.

Festive Season at the Legislature

On December 4, Deputy Premier Shirley McClellan and Speaker Kowalski launched the holiday season by switching on the Christmas lights on the Legislature grounds. Celebrate the Season events continued through to December 23 and attracted over 11,600 visitors to listen to choirs in the Rotunda. The pedway was filled with trees and gingerbread houses decorated by Edmonton and area students.

Throughout the year a number of youth parliament organizations visit the Legislature, some of which participate in mock parliaments in the Legislature Chamber. The Alberta Girls' Parliament (March 27), the Forum for Young Albertans (April 27 to May 2) and the University of Alberta Model Parliament (January 10 to 12) held mock parliaments. As well, the Alberta Debate and Speech Association (November 17 to 21) and Parlement jeunesse de l'Alberta (May 2 to 4) also used the Chamber.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an association of members of Commonwealth parliaments who, irrespective of race, religion, or culture are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, and by pursuit of the positive ideals of democracy. Canada was one of the six original member countries of the CPA when it was formed in 1911 under the name the Empire Parliamentary Association. Each provincial and territorial Legislative Assembly in Canada as well as the federal Parliament comprises a branch of the CPA. All Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta are members of the Alberta branch of the CPA.

President's Report

Speaker Ken Kowalski, President of the Alberta Branch of the CPA

The theme of the 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was "Partnerships for Global Peace and Security." Interparliamentary opportunities enable Members to share experiences and points of view with their counterparts across Canada and around the world, providing an awareness of the global context in which decisions are made. It is partly from the knowledge gained through liaising with others that we draw upon when considering improvements within our system. It is also through building relationships with parliaments across the globe that we gain insight and tolerance.

Often issues at the forefront for Alberta are also top priority for other parliaments. As the National Conference of State Legislators in San Francisco, California, proved, many parallels can be drawn between the Canadian and American systems. Health care and education hold challenges for both our nations. As well, energy issues such as electricity deregulation are common themes. Because the United States is our most important trade partner, this conference in particular proved an effective forum for discussion of trade issues such as BSE. As there are many cultural, economic and political similarities between us and our closest neighbour, the continued fostering of positive relations and understanding between our nations is essential.

It is always necessary to question whether or not we can improve the ways in which we represent the concerns of our constituents. At the 42nd Canadian Regional Conference, held in Victoria, British Columbia, electoral reform and political reforms were discussed. As well, a session dealing with public perception of parliamentarians and strategies for improvement showed that perception is often more important than reality. These conferences help to uncover ways in which parliaments can work together for the betterment of their provinces.

Technological advancement and the challenges that it brings continue to be a never-ending reality for parliaments throughout the Commonwealth. In fact in 2003, our Legislature Chamber was equipped with an upgraded audio system, and video streaming of Oral Question Period was introduced to allow the public to view the proceedings online.

Alberta continues to play a leading role in interparliamentary relations. As I have always encouraged Member development, I was pleased to see several Alberta delegates chairing sessions and becoming actively involved in the conferences they attended. The work of Members and support staff at conferences ultimately benefits the people of Alberta. We come together without the constraint of party lines. We are parliamentarians looking to listen and learn so as to foster cooperation and understanding across this broad world in which we live.

Secretary's Report

W.J. David McNeil, Secretary of the Alberta Branch of the CPA and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

There are over 183 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association branches in national, state, provincial and territorial parliaments with over 15,000 parliamentarians involved. The Alberta Legislative Assembly has always considered interparliamentary relations a priority and this year over 40 delegates participated in 14 parliamentary conferences, visits or meetings.

The 42nd Canadian Regional Conference was held in the majestic setting that is Victoria, British Columbia. The topics covered included:

- Electoral Reform
- The Emerging Role of Private Members in B.C.
- Health Care: Policy and Reforms: Current Experiences and Perspectives
- Public Perception of Parliamentarians: Strategies for Improvement
- Educating our Children: Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency
- Polling: Legitimacy and Impact on the Public Policy Process
- The News Media and Parliament: The Role of the Fourth Estate
- Making Parliament Work for Parliamentarians: The Case for Political Reforms

I, along with the delegate party, enjoyed the parliamentary visit to Europe and State Legislative Leaders Foundation/Europe in which we visited Cracow and Warsaw, Poland; Berlin, Dresden, Munich and Frankfurt, Germany; Prague, Czech Republic; and Vienna, Austria. During our stay we managed to balance meetings with delegates and parliamentary officials from each region with a delightful taste of culture and history. In 2003, Alberta once again eagerly sent representatives to Germany to participate in the Partnership of Parliaments, Study Tour. Four Alberta delegates attended the tour, which provided the opportunity to meet with German state and municipal leaders as well as delegates from Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Many topics were discussed during this visit, among them the challenges Germany faces with regard to their energy and educational programs. The opportunity to establish educational exchanges between university students in Germany and Canada was discussed.

It is always enlightening to see that parliamentary challenges abroad and even across Canada are often quite similar, but the ways in which the challenges are dealt with are often slightly different. It is because of the added perspective that interparliamentary relations provide that makes the experiences so rewarding and educational.

As with Members of the Legislative Assembly, staff of the Assembly are encouraged to participate in interparliamentary relations, and I have been very impressed with their level of participation.

Bursaries

Bursaries are presented to nominees from TUXIS Parliament of Alberta and the Alberta Girls' Parliament to increase interest in the parliamentary process among young Albertans. On May 29, Speaker Kowalski awarded bursaries to Karl Bossler of the Calgary-Cross constituency for TUXIS and to Sarah Monkman of Sherwood Park and Robin Weimer of Calgary -North West for the Alberta Girls' Parliament.

Grade 6 Essay Contest

To encourage greater awareness of the Commonwealth and the parliamentary system, a province-wide essay contest is held annually for Grade 6 students. Joseph Boissonneault of Calgary-Varsity was the grand prize winner for 2003.

Conferences

Canadian Regional Presiding Officers' Conference

Toronto, Ontario *January 23 – 26*

Agenda

1) Address by CPA Secretary-General
2) Relocating Legislatures for Special Sittings: The New York City Session of U.S. Congress
3) Security at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
4) Parliamentary Reform: Responding to Concerns of a Democratic Deficit
5) Parliamentary Assemblies and New Technologies: Issues, Pitfalls and Future Prospects
6) Masters of Our Own House—Judicial Consideration of Parliamentary Privilege in the Northwest Territories
7) Parliamentary Privilege and the Courts in Canada
8) New Executive Secretary to the Canadian Branch of CPA

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker
Shiraz Shariff, MLA, Calgary-McCall
Don Tannas, MLA, Highwood
David McNeil, Clerk

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

I have always found this conference an excellent and timely forum for the issues facing Presiding Officers. It also provides an opportunity to re-establish contacts with interprovincial counterparts to review areas of interest and concern. This year's sessions provided insight into several issues.

I found the topic of temporary relocation of the legislature site in response to a social, political or disaster situation most interesting. As well, security issues faced by Ontario's Legislative Assembly, fixed election dates and issues regarding the use of lap tops, palm pilots and cell phones in the Chamber were covered.

Katherine Peterson, Q.C. presented issues related to Parliamentary Privilege in the North West Territories and the issue of Parliamentary privilege and the courts in Canada presented by Neil Finkelstein was the highlight of the conference.

Don Tannas, MLA, Highwood

Partnership of Parliaments

Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg and Berlin, Germany
June 23–July 6

Agenda

Rhineland-Palatinate

1) Presentation:The Structure of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Work of the State Parliaments
2) Discussion with Members of Parliament
3) Guided tour of UNESCO World Heritage site
4) Discussion with the administrative body of Rhineland-Palatinate

Saarland

1) Opening Ceremony of the Borderlands: New Brunswick and the Saarland Conference
   - Session 1 — Topic 1: Reflections on Geographical Peripherality and Cultural Centrality
     Topic 2: Surviving or Thriving? New Brunswick's Position in Canada and North America in the New Millennium
   - Session 2 — Topic 1: New Brunswick and the Saarland—Two Provinces on the Periphery. An Economic and Socio-geographical Comparison
     Topic 2: A Re-Evaluation of Social Capital Theory: New Brunswick as a Test Case Presentation
   - Session 3 — Topic 1: Innovation and Strategies in the Saarland
     Topic 2: Saarland University as an International Construct
   - Session 4 — Topic 1: Literature in Saarland. A Brief Overview from 1946 until today
     Topic 2: Bakeries and Bratwurst? The Image Problem of Germany and Germans in Neubraunschweig
2) Signing of the Agreement of Co-operation between the University of the Saarland and the University of New Brunswick

Baden-Württemberg

1) Visit to the Vogtsbauernhöfe Museum
2) Guided tour of Ludwigsburger Castle
3) Tour of the Parliament
4) Welcome and Greeting by State Secretary of the Economic Ministry
5) Topic: Economics and Politics in Baden-Württemberg

Berlin

1) Guided city tour
2) Speech by Mr. Roman Washuk, political advisor to the Canadian Ambassador
3) Partnership of Parliaments Grand Event

Alberta Delegation

Ian McClelland, MLA, Edmonton-Rutherford
Luke Ouellette, MLA, Innisfail Sylvan Lake
Doug Griffiths, MLA, Wainwright
Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster

Delegates Report *(edited for length)*

It is my pleasure on behalf of myself and the other Alberta delegates to report the events of the 2003 Partnership of Parliaments Study Tour of Germany. Canada has participated in this parliamentary exchange since 1993 and is represented by Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador.

There were two elements to the experience. One was the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with German state and municipal leaders both elected and appointed, and the other was an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other Canadian parliamentarians. Both opportunities were extremely valuable.

The delegation was fully occupied each day of the exchange. We were exposed in a forthright and direct fashion to both the successes of German technology and work ethic as well as some of the challenges Germany faces at integrating, then bringing to western standards, the former East Germany. As well, German states participate in a revenue sharing scheme similar to our equalization program, a program not without some problems. The states we visited are making the transition from nuclear and fossil energy to hydro and wind power at great expense and with more internal controversy than we see here. Additionally, the education system lags Canada in international testing, and the state of Baden-Württemberg is sending a delegation to Canada to see what we do right.

The opportunity to meet legislators and industry leaders personally, to learn something of their country, was most valuable and rewarding.

Ian McCLelland, MLA, Edmonton Rutherford
Luke Ouellette, MLA, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake
Doug Griffiths, MLA, Wainwright
Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster

Europe and State Legislative Leaders Foundation

Poland, Germany, Czech Republic and Austria July 2 – 25

Agenda

Berlin, Germany

1) Briefing
2) Courtesy call on Speaker of the Berlin Legislature, Walter Momper
3) Tour of German Federal Parliament
4) Luncheon hosted by Ambassador Marie Bernard-Meunier
5) Courtesy call on President of the Bundesrat, Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer
6) Courtesy call on the President of the German Federal Parliament, Wolfgang Thierse
7) City tour
8) Briefing luncheon at Partnership of Parliaments Office

Warsaw, Poland

1) Meeting with Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy Director, Department of International Bilateral Cooperation, Mr. Zbigniew Kubacki, Senior Specialist
2) Visit Polish Chamber of Commerce
3) Courtesy call on Speaker of the Provincial Parliament, Adam Struzik
4) Briefing by Ambassador Ralph Lysyhyn
5) Meeting with Polish Oil and Gas Company
6) Courtesy call on Deputy Speaker of the Senate, Jolanta Danielak
7) Tour of the Parliament
8) Lunch hosted by Chair of the Polish-North American Parliamentary Group, Mr. Pawel Piskorski

Cracow, Poland

1) Guided tour of Cracow
2) Transatlantic Forum of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation
3) Tour of the Salt Mine in Wieliczka
4) Visit to the Concentration Camp Museum Auschwitz or visit to the Silesian Castle in Pszczyna

Dresden, Germany

1) Tour of Dresden
2) Meeting with the President of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Hartmut Paul and Deputy Managing Director, Mr. Schnell and other Chamber representatives
3) Meeting with the Lord Mayor, Mr. Ingolf Roßberg
4) Welcome by the President of the Saxon State Parliament, the Hon. Erich Iltgen, MdL
5) Tour of Leipzig
6) Lunch with the Mayor of Leipzig, Mr. Kaminski
7) Meeting with the Mayor of Grimma, Mr. Matthias Berger
8) Town Hall-Tour of Grimma
9) Visit to Semper Opera House *The Nutcracker* ballet production
10) Meeting with the Saxon State Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Horst Rasch

Prague, Czech Republic

1) Meeting with the Chairman and Members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security
2) Meeting with the Committee on Public Administration, Regional Development and Environment
3) Lunch hosted by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Brydl
4) Meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Ruml
5) Tour of Wallenstein Palace – Seat of the Senate
6) Meeting with the Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
7) Vienna, Austria
8) Meeting with the Second President of the Landtag Rathaus, Prof. Erika Stubenvoll (SPO)
9) Guided tour through the Rathaus

Munich, Germany

1) Breakfast meeting at the Bayerischer Landtag with the Speaker of the Bavarian Legislature, Herr Johann Böhm and Frau Mathilde Stamm from the Protocol Office
2) German Canadian Business Club Luncheon presentation by the Hon. Ken Kowalski: Alberta's Economy

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker
David McNeil, Clerk
Thomas Lukaszuk, MLA, Edmonton-Castle Downs

42nd Canadian Regional Conference

Victoria, British Columbia *July 12 – 18*

Agenda

1) Electoral Reform
2) The Emerging Role of Private Members in B.C.
3) Health Care: Policy and Reforms – Current Experiences and Perspectives
4) Public Perception of Parliamentarians: Strategies for Improvement
5) Educating our Children: Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency
6) Polling: Legitimacy and Impact on the Public Policy Process
7) The News Media and Parliament: The Role of the Fourth Estate
8) Making Parliament Work for Parliamentarians: The Case for Political Reforms

Alberta Delegation

Yvonne Fritz, MLA, Calgary-Cross (Head of Delegation)
Tony Abbott, MLA,Drayton Valley-Calmar
LeRoy johnson, MLA, Wetaskiwin-Camrose
Tony Vandermeer, MLA, Edmonton-Manning
Debby Carlson, MLA, Edmonton Ellerslie
Gary Masyk, MLA, Edmonton-Norwood

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

The official ceremonies took place in the beautiful B.C. Legislative Assembly with the Hon. Claude Richmond, Speaker of the Assembly and Conference Chair, presiding. Addresses were given by MP Robert Speller, Chair of the Executive Committee, and Hon. Denis Marshall, QSO Secretary General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. All business sessions were held in the Crystal Ballroom of the Empress Hotel.

Electoral Reform

An overview of recent developments in B.C. featuring three presenters: Gordon Gibson, the architect of the new Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. Nick Loenen, co-founder of Fair Voting B.C. and strong advocate of proportional representation and Hon. Ronald I. Cheffins, who discussed several types of electoral systems found in democratic jurisdictions.

The Emerging Role of Private Members in B.C.

Ralph Sultan, MLA (B.C.), and Jack Weisgerber, former MLA (B.C.), offered informed perspectives on actual and potential reforms that enhance the role of the private members in B.C. For example, Government Caucus Committees—something that has been done in Alberta for the past 10 years.

Health Care: Policy and Reforms – Current Experiences and Perspectives

Common themes in health care across the country are regionalization, shifts from acute care, primary care reform, home and community reform and information technology reform. Debby Carlson, MLA, chaired this session and surmised: The topic of health reform was very interesting this year because we were given an excellent overview of challenges across the country. These challenges have common themes with unique regional differences.

Public Perception of Parliamentarians: Strategies for Improvement

There is a high level of cynicism among the Canadian public about integrity of elected officials and the importance of their legislative work. Perceptions become reality, so there is a role for Parliamentarians in educating the public on the workings and importance of parliament.

Educating our Children: Measures of Effectiveness and Efficiency

Yvonne Fritz, MLA, presented a paper at this session. Some of her comments on the discussion are as follows. Ensuring our students have the skills and knowledge they require for a changing world is the foundation for the future of our country. In order to measure the performance of the education systems, several jurisdictions have recently introduced new accountability bench marks. There was a high level of interest in Alberta's three year business plan process. The effectiveness of setting goals, performance measures and financial targets was thoroughly discussed. Annual reports being produced each fiscal year containing both financial statements and comparisons of the actual performance results to the desired results in the business plan were well received.

Polling: Legitimacy and Impact on the Public Policy Process

Public opinion polls are important because they give legislators a map of people's thoughts. They can reflect both short and long term thinking on issues. Good politicians will set out a clear vision and only use polls to gauge how people are catching on rather than using polls to shape public policy. Polls are a valuable tool if used carefully in the political process.

The News Media and Parliament: The Role of the Fourth Estate

The media helps in the accountability process for government. The modern press gallery openly admits that their role has changed to a more controversial and sensational reporting style since the expansion of the Internet.

Making Parliament Work for Parliamentarians: The Case for Political Reforms

Dr. John Weisbeck, MLA, British Columbia, and Ben Heppner, MLA, Saskatchewan, presented views on reform and ideas for improving the current system. Parliament must work independent of government.

LeRoy Johnson, Tony Abbott, Debby Carlson, Yvonne Fritz, Gary Masyk and Tony Vandermeer

Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER)

Calgary, Alberta *July 13 – 17*

Agenda

Sunday

1) Registration
2) Calgary Stampede
3) PNWER Executive Committee Meeting

Monday

1) PNWER Working Groups
   - Transportation
   - Energy I – Oil
   - Environment
   - Trade and Economic Development
2) Luncheon Keynote – Hon. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta
3) PNWER Working Groups
   - Sustainable Development
   - Transportation II
   - Energy I – Gas
   - Trade and Economic Development
4) Opening Reception

Tuesday

1) Stampede Breakfast
2) PNWER Working Groups
   - Energy I – Electricity
   - Agriculture
   - Border Issues
   - Forestry
3) Luncheon Keynote – Hon. Spencer Abraham, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
4) PNWER Working Groups
   - Energy I – Clean Coal
   - Agriculture II
   - Workforce Development

Wednesday

1) PNWER Working Groups
   - Healthcare
   - Energy I – Strategic Planning
   - High-Tech
   - Tourism
2) PNWER Working Groups
   - Homeland Security
   - Energy II
   - Infrastructure Finance
3) PNWER Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday

1) Alberta Oil Sands Tour

Alberta Delegation

Alana DeLong, MLA, Calgary-Bow
Drew Hutton, MLA, Edmonton-Glenora
Hon. Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure
Richard Marz, MLA, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills
Doug Griffiths, MLA, Wainwright
Karen Kryczka, MLA, Calgary-West
Rob Renner, MLA, Medicine Hat
Cindy Ady, MLA, Calgary-Shaw
Mel Knight, MLA, Grande Prairie-Smoky
Albert Klapstein, MLA, Leduc
Hon. Shirley McClellan, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Hon. David Coutts, Minister of Government Services
Hon. Clint Dunford, Minister of Human Resources and Employment
Hon. Halvar Jonson, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations

National Conference of State Legislatures

San Francisco, California *July 21 – 25*

Agenda

Topics

1) State and Economic Outlook: When Can States Expect Relief?
2) Streamlining Sales Taxes
3) Cyber Security: Protecting Technology
4) Implementing No Child Left Behind
5) New Funding Strategies for Higher Education
6) Reducing Dependence on Foreign Energy Supplies
7) Medicaid Crisis
8) Ethics
9) Predatory Lending
10) Preferred Drug Lists
11) Terrorism Preparedness
12) Child Care
13) Medical Malpractice
14) Can Sentencing Be Tough When Times Are Tough?
15) TEA-21 Reauthorization

Sessions

1) Technology and the Legislative Process
2) The New Legislative Agencies
3) The Art of Parliamentary Procedure
4) Keeping a Sense of Humor When the Legislature is Derailed
5) Help! I'm Drowning in Information
6) Demographic Trends That Shape Policy

Alberta Delegation

Barry McFarland, MLA, Little Bow
Hugh MacDonald, MLA, Edmonton-Gold Bar
Julius Yankowsky, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview
Cindy Ady, MLA, Calgary-Shaw

Delegate Reports *(edited for length)*

The conference agenda was extensive, but I found the most interesting seminars and debates to be focused on energy issues. Electricity deregulation was a topic of intense discussion, with standing room only at all the workshops by delegates from across North America and Europe. The discussions with the international delegates certainly were informative but I found the public policy discussions with the American state legislators to be more beneficial. The problems they face are similar to those we have in Alberta and the solutions they proposed were certainly of interest. However, I was disappointed with how little information was available on BSE Many American legislators that I talked to were not even aware that the border with Canada had been closed. BSE is a North American problem, and the conference was an excellent forum to explain Alberta's integration with the entire North American beef market.

Hugh MacDonald, MLA Edmonton Gold Bar

North American issues on health and education seemed to dominate the interactive sessions. Many of the sessions were highlighted by keynote speakers. The largest and most informative session was an explanation of the American Health Care System and 20 ways to access it. Dr. Uwe Reinhardt presented to a large crowd and on a number of occasions, complimented the Canadian Health Care System.

Keeping with current issues, BSE was discussed. Surprisingly, and very unfortunately, few people at the convention were aware of the issue, and fewer still were aware of the border closures.

The once-in-a-lifetime highlight had to be the recall of Governor Gray. During our time in San Francisco, the first recall under state legislation took place a mere eight months following the election of Governor Gray. He was recalled by the requisite number of Californians, and a new election will take place in October 2003.

History will tell us how recall ultimately works. In the meantime, we should be very proud to be legislators in the best province in Canada.

Barry McFarland, MLA, Little Bow

This is an important conference attended by state legislators and staff from every U.S. state, as well as international delegates from throughout the world. Decisions made at this conference are sent to the President and Congress for review and possible implementation.

Almost every issue imaginable was discussed. I spent the majority of my time at sessions dealing with current issues common to Canada and Alberta. Issues such as education, healthcare, renewable energy and public/private partnerships were topics of great interest. It was interesting to discover that the issues we are struggling with here in Alberta and Canada are common to the United States as well as worldwide. Delegates not only discussed issues but also offered solutions and some were backed up with case studies.

I have returned with notes, literature and CDs filled with ideas on ways to do things better. I am excited about sharing these ideas with our Ministers and municipal officials. Ideas for water conservation, public/private partnerships for roads, buildings and even social services were presented. Melinda Gates had a very interesting presentation regarding what she and her husband Bill Gates are doing to promote a smaller schools concept and it's exciting! I really want to share this information with our Minister of Learning.

Overall the conference was time well spent, and if I can promote even one of the great ideas I learned about on doing things better here in Alberta, the benefits could far outweigh the time and cost of attending the conference.

Julius Yankowsky, MLA, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview

Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC)

Winnipeg, Manitoba *September 14 – 16*

Agenda

1) The John J. Kelly Forum (joint session with CCOLA delegates): Reporting Principles and Parliamentary Effectiveness
2) Round Table on Calling Federal Witnesses to Provincial Public Accounts Committees
3) Best Practices: Lessons Learned from Public Accounts Committees around the World
4) Reports from Jurisdictions
5) Round Table on the Relationship between Public Accounts Committees and the Office of the Auditor
6) Observation of Question Period, Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Alberta Delegation

Dave Broda, MLA, Redwater
Shiraz Shariff, MLA, Calgary-McCall
Corinne Dacyshyn, Committee Clerk

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

The Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees Conference was attended by parliamentarians, researchers and committee clerks from across Canada and the Canadian House of Commons. A delegate from the Parliament of Tasmania, Australia, also attended.

The reports from jurisdictions focussed on innovative practices of public accounts committees and were extremely informative. As always, the opportunity to meet counterparts and Auditors General from around the country and Australia is worthwhile and appreciated.

Further, the round table on the relationship between public accounts committees and provincial auditors general outlined interesting differences in each province. Of particular note was the way in which each province held competitions for the position of Auditor General. Alberta's selection process (appointing a select special committee specifically for the task) seems to be unique.

Shiraz Shariff, Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts

12th National Speakers Conference

Honolulu, Hawaii *September 17 – 21*

Agenda

Wednesday

1) NSC Executive Committee Meeting
2) Opening Reception

Thursday

1) Golf Tournament and lunch
2) Michigan Preview Reception
3) Reception and Luau

Friday

1) Plenary session (Speakers, Sponsors and Chiefs of Staff)
   Panel on Asian Economic Opportunities
2) Speakers-only Session
   Camp Smith: Briefing by Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command
3) Chiefs of Staff only session

Saturday

1) NSC Executive Committee Meeting/Buffet Breakfast
2) Plenary session (Speakers, Sponsors and Chiefs of Staff)

Alberta Delegation

Hon. Ken Kowalski, Speaker

Regional Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Lafayette, Louisiana *September 17 – 21*

Agenda

1) The Education of Children in a Minority Setting
2) Election Observation Missions by APF members
3) The State of Francophonie in America
4) Guest Speaker: Dr. Aldy Castor, President of the Haitian Resource Development Foundation
5) Resolutions

Alberta Delegation

Denis Ducharme, MLA, Bonnyville-Cold Lake
Denis Herard, MLA, Calgary-Egmont
Hector Goudreau, MLA, Dunvegan
Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

The theme of the first working session, entitled The Education of Children in a Minority Setting dealt with the difficulties faced by francophone communities trying to provide young children living in a minority setting with quality educational and social programs in French. With few exceptions, francophone families live in communities where English is the dominant lan-

guage. It was noted that the number of exogamous couples is increasing and that most of these individuals speak English at home. Mrs. Claudette Boyer from the Ontario section reviewed the document entitled *Early Childhood: Gateway to French Language Schools*—a National Vision produced by CIRCEM (Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Citizenship and Minorities, University of Ottawa in partnership with the Canadian Teachers' Federation). An extensive discussion followed on this issue. It was observed that because responsibility for education was spread throughout various ministries, it was difficult to obtain federal financing for various programs from one source. A round table discussion of what services were available in the respective provinces and states followed.

The theme for the second session of the conference dealt with the election observation missions by APF members. Senator Gerald Comeau chaired the meeting, which reviewed Dr. Patry's report on the Formation/Information Session on Election Observation Missions held in Ottawa in February of this year.

Mr. Bordeleau was the guest speaker for the third business session. He discussed the State of Francophonie in America. He reviewed a summary prepared by the Quebec section based on the results of a questionnaire sent to the various sections following the September 2002 APF meeting in Halifax. The summary covers the status of French in particular regions, the percentage of the population that is francophone, whether the use of French is decreasing or increasing, legislative laws governing French language, the department/ministry responsible for Francophone Affairs, francophone associations at work in each jurisdiction, and access to medical services in French.

Six resolutions stemming from the business sessions were drafted, discussed and carried. One of these resolutions was introduced by the Alberta delegation urging all sections of the America Region to pressure their respective governments to collaborate with the Canadian government to ensure the complete and immediate opening of foreign frontiers for Canadian beef and beef by-products. The motion was agreed to.

Mention should be made of the great strides made by Louisiana Francophones in revitalizing the French language in the state given the incredible obstacles faced by its inhabitants in recent years. At one point in their history, as recently as the '50s and '60s, the teaching of French in the school system was strictly forbidden.

Attendance at these gatherings provide immeasurable opportunities to learn and exchange information with elected members from other jurisdictions and to stay informed on francophone issues.

Denis Ducharme, MLA Bonnyville-Cold Lake; Hector Goudreau, MLA Dunvegan; Denis Herard, MLA Calgary-Egmont

8th Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs

Winnipeg, Manitoba *September 18 –19*

Agenda

Thursday

1) Introduction
2) Interprovincial/territorial cooperation on francophone affairs
    (a) Leadership and setting of directions for francophone affairs
        - Intergovernmental Action Plan – for collective initiatives
        - Frame of reference and Guide – for individual government initiatives
    (b) Agreements and projects
        - Bilateral agreements and their results
        - Intergovernmental Project 2004 – Poster on Francophone Development in Canada
        - Coordination of Intergovernmental Francophone Affairs project
3) French Language health services – networking, training and services

4) Renewal of Promotion of Official Languages agreements
    - Report on the discussions on this topic since the last Ministerial Conference
5) Review of the September 19 Session agenda

Friday

1) Greetings and introductions of delegates
2) Written record of the 2002 Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs
3) Federal-provincial/territorial cooperation
    (a) Federal Action Plan on Official Languages
        - Presentation by Federal minister and discussion on:
            -Objectives and importance of the plan
            -Interdepartmental and intergovernmental aspects of the plan
            -Implications for provincial and territorial governments
    (b) Agreements on Promotion of Official Languages
        - The next generation of agreements
        - Points to take into consideration in the renewal of the agreements
4) The vitality of Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities
    - Demographic situation of the communities
    - Strengthening the communities – regional strategy and national reflection
5) Bilingual service centres (single windows)
    - Implementation of important principles for French language services
6) Update on current files
    - Health Services in French
    - Early Childhood Development
    - Francophone/Acadian Community Economic Development
    - French Visibility, Dialogue with Community and Government Commitment
    - Francophone Immigration
7) Other important files to consider at the Ministerial Conference level
    - Francophone Cultural Development
    - Access to Justice in French
8) Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs in 2004
9) Closing remarks

Alberta Delegation

Wayne Cao, Calgary-Fort

Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL)

Austin, Texas *September 21 – 24*

Agenda

1) Electronic Filing
2) Municipal Ethics Roundtable
3) The Kay Williams First Timers' session
4) Opening Ceremony
5) Plenary Session: The Honourable James Douglas, Governor of Vermont
6) Campaign Finance Update
7) Municipal Regulation of Lobbying and Campaign Finance

8) The Web as a Cost-effective Communication Tool
9) The Role of FOI Agencies and the News Media in an Era of Heightened Security
10) What Does it Mean To Have a Good Ethics Program?: Successes and Vulnerabilities of Government Ethics Programs
11) Ethics Update
12) Electronic Voting
13) Proven Strategies in Compliance Education and Assistance
14) The Impact of Technology on Access to Government Records and Meetings (Part1)
15) Lobbying Update
16) Understanding the Help America Vote Act
17) Effective Media Relations
18) The Impact of Technology on Access to Government Records and Meetings (Part 2)
19) Breakfast and Table Topics
20) Plenary Session: Juan Hernandez, Cabinet Minister, Mexico
21) Electronic Filing Update
22) Professional Development
23) Interaction Between the Regulated Community and the Regulators
24) Freedom of Information Litigation/Legislation Update
25) Lunch/Plenary Session: Jim Hightower, National Radio Commentor/Author
26) Ethics Enforcement Actions
27) Appointed vs. Elected Judges
28) The Impact of BCRA on Regulating Committees and Donors
29) Freedom of Information Roundtable (Part 1)
30) A Study of Public Financing Acts in Maine and Arizona
31) The Wide, Wide World of Election Litigation: Who's Suing, Who's Threatening, Who's Winning?
32) Creating Positive Working Relationships Between Your Agency and Legislators
33) Freedom of Information Roundtable (Part 2)
34) Open Government Beyond Our Borders
35) COGEL Business Meeting

Alberta Delegation

Janis Tarchuk, MLA ,Banff-Cochrane
Marlene Graham, MLA, Calgary-Lougheed
Laurie Blakeman, MLA, Edmonton-Centre
Mary O'Neill, MLA, St. Albert

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

Laurie Blakeman, Marlene Graham, Mary O'Neill, Members of the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Offices and I attended the 2003 Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) Conference in Austin, Texas, from September 21 to September 24. As in previous years, there was representation from the Offices of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The host for this year's Conference was the Texas Ethics Commission, and the extensive program covered topics ranging from elections, campaign finance, freedom of information and protection of privacy, and ethics issues. There was a particular emphasis on freedom of information and protection of privacy, and senior staff from the Office of Alberta's Information and Privacy Commissioner participated as panelists and moderators in a number of sessions.

There were two keynote speakers: Mr. Juan Hernandez, Cabinet Minister from Mexico; and Mr. Jim Hightower, National Radio commentator and author. The keynote addresses were insightful, entertaining and sometimes provocative. Mr. Juan Hernandez highlighted the unique status of Mexican/USA residents and their cross-nation voting and financial issues. His talk prompted one delegate to attend the University of Texas campus to explore its cultural and educational program offerings. Mr. Jim Hightower called for dramatic disclosure and legislative accountability to the electorate. The protection of privacy for individual citizens is very much a cross-jurisdictional challenge. Workshops offered some suggestions.

There were a number of informative sessions relating to freedom of information, with the Canadian and American systems highlighted as among the best in the world. There was a session dealing with conflict resolution in the workplace and interesting discussions relating to the roles of elected officials, ethics agencies and information and privacy bodies with the media. A number of sessions provided updates on ethics and information and privacy issues in various jurisdictions.

COGEL is an international organization, and this conference attracts delegates from all over the world. The conference provided opportunities to discuss current ethics, elections, and information and privacy issues with delegates who attended from Canada, the United States, and from a number of other countries, including Mexico and Australia. Delegates also attended the COGEL Annual Awards Banquet at the Bob Bullock Texas History Museum, where President Jimmy Carter was awarded the COGEL Award in recognition of his work with the Carter Center, which he founded in 1982.

Janis Tarchuk, MLA, Banff-Cochrane

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

Dhaka, Bangladesh *October 4 – 13*

Agenda

Saturday

1) Meeting of the Working Party

Sunday

1) Meeting of the Executive Committee
2) Opening and meeting of the Small Countries Conference
3) Arrival of Members of the CWP Steering Committee

Monday

1) Meeting of the Executive Committee
2) Small Countries Conference
3) Meeting of the CWP Steering Committee
4) Arrival of Delegates, Observers etc.

Tuesday

1) Briefing for workshops (Moderators, Discussion leaders, Rapporteurs and Session Secretaries)
2) General Briefing for Delegates, Observers and Secretaries
3) Briefing for Spouses
4) Official Inauguration of the 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference by the Hon. Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Vice-Patron of the CPA, H. E. Begum Khaleda Zia, MP.
5) Regional Group Meetings
6) Plenary Session: Addresses by the CPA Secretary-General and Commonwealth Secretary-General followed by Question and Answer Session

Wednesday

1) River Cruise on the River Meghna or a trip to Jamuna Bridge

Thursday

1) First Plenary Session
2) Meetings of Society of Clerks at-the-Table
3) Workshops (A,B,C)
4) Workshops (D,E,F)

Friday

1) Breakfast-CWP Business Meeting
2) Plenary Session (on Gender Related Theme)
3) Meeting of Society of Clerks at-the-Table
4) General Assembly
5) Final Plenary
6) Meeting of the new Executive Committee

Alberta Delegation

Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA, Red Deer-North

Delegate Report *(edited for length)*

On October 6, 2003, I attended the sixth meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee for the 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference 2003. The meeting was chaired by Begum Khurshid Zahan Haque, MP, Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, Bangladesh.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Africa, Australia, British Islands and the Mediterranean, Canada, the Caribbean, Atlantic and the Americas, Pacific and South East Asia. It was a colourful and dynamic meeting with very assertive and determined representatives who felt that reform of the Steering Committee and the position of Chairperson were overdue.

Eight recommendations were presented to the steering committee by the Secretary General to reform the structure of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP). The CWP Chairperson will now be elected, for three years, by women members attending the CWP Business Meeting. The elected Chairperson will also become an ex-officio member of the CPA Executive Committee.

The official inauguration of the 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference took place in the Bangladesh China Conference Centre in Dhaka on Tuesday, October 7, 2003. Plenary Sessions and Workshops were offered until October 11. The theme for this year's conference was Partnerships for Global Peace and Security.

There were 32 other Canadian representatives. By sharing information and getting to know each other, we were able to contribute to global peace and stability. I especially appreciated having the opportunity to meet people from the Commonwealth and learning about their cultures and ways of life.
This was a journey that reinforced the value of democratic governments free from corruption and the value of a good education for everyone.

All Canadians should be very proud of our quality of life and the commitment of the provincial and federal governments to serve the people of Canada.

Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA Red Deer-North

27th Canadian Regional Seminar

Iqaluit, Nunavut *October 16 – 19*

Agenda

1) E-Democracy and Parliament
2) Seniors Benefit Plan
3) Casting Vote
4) Long-term Care Accommodation

Alberta Delegation

Karen Kryczka, MLA, Calgary-West
Jon Lord, MLA, Calgary-Currie
George VanderBurg, MLA, Whitecourt-Ste. Anne
Wayne Cao, MLA, Calgary-Fort

Delegate Reports *(edited for length)*

Visiting this part of Canada and meeting Nunavut elected officials joined by other parliamentarians from across Canada broadened my knowledge and views of issues throughout the country.

No doubt the most interesting education session for me was presented by Nunavut's Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon. Kevin O'Brien, on Consensus Government. In my view Northern Canada is being well served by this form of government and through discussions with MLAs and local citizens from Iqaluit the system has wide support. Voter turnout is high as well as general knowledge of issues.

I was very proud of our delegation. Without doubt a major role in the conference, both in attendance and participation, was contributed by Alberta. I do believe that we should meet with Minister Mark Norris to discuss economic benefits that Albertans could have through stronger political ties with the north. Mining, tourism, health services and educational opportunities abound. We should not miss the economic boom that the North is facing—eastern Canadian provinces are already paying attention.

If all Albertans traveled to this part of Canada, Alberta would be an easier province to govern. We truly live in a province with endless opportunities and we should all be more thankful for what we take for granted each and every day.

George VanderBurg, MLA Whitecourt-Ste. Anne

Not having ever traveled to Canada's north before, I was not sure what to expect. However, by the end of the conference I was sad that we had to leave so fast. I am very pleased to say that I enjoyed the trip immensely, and definitely came away with a much better understanding of some of the issues and problems faced by the north.

Clearly, economic development is very high on the list of things needed to be done in Iqaluit and Nunavut. It would appear that there is a lot of opportunity, just not enough people, resources and basically organizational effort. The new parliament and government of Nunavut are clearly forward-thinking people, well travelled and experienced and no doubt will be making great strides in the coming years.
I was very impressed by the spirit of Iqaluit and can certainly see that with proper government and guidance, much good will be coming out of this desolate part of Canada in the coming years—and we were certainly impressed with the calibre of the people involved in the new government. I do think that we learned more about the people there than they learned from us, although I do think our team made some excellent contributions to the discussions in the business conferences.

Jon Lord, MLA Calgary-Currie

The subjects of discussion:

E-Democracy and Parliament

- Ease of electronic communication between elected officials and their constituents.
- Information accessibility for elected officials and public at large.
- Issues of reliability and accuracy of information and data posted in Internet
- Issues of misinformation or disinformation via mass electronic communication
- I expressed a vision of a futuristic direct democracy where constituents participate through electronic communication in policy and legislative development without the need of elected officials.

Seniors Benefit Plan

- Issues of aging population and the health care and social support required
- Issues of home care and seniors residence
- Alberta seniors' benefit program is the envy of other jurisdictions
- Consensus Government
- Consensus is an agreement on the alternative
- Caucus team playing
- Collective wisdom
- Election of the Speaker
- Election of Government Leaders and Ministers

Casting Vote

- Free vote in the Chamber
- The role and experience of the Speaker's votes
- Elected Members' vote related to constituency, party, public majority and conscience

Long-term Care Accommodation

- Separation of Health Care Services from Accommodation
- Choices of care services and accommodation, beyond the public funded standards

What I have learned about Nunavut and Iqaluit:

- Official languages are Inuktitut, Inuinnagtun and English
- The Legislative Assembly is non-partisan
- The Speaker, the Premier and the Ministers are elected by and from the Members of the Legislative Assembly

Nunavut, Canada's most northern territory, has been home to Inuit for millennia and part of Canada for more than a century. Embracing both traditional knowledge and values and the new opportunities presented by technologies like the Internet, the Government of Nunavut now provides a wide range of services tailored to the unique needs of approximately 29,000 residents. Nunavut's capital city is Iqaluit (formerly Frobisher Bay), a small, isolated community on the bay.

Wayne Cao, MLA Calgary-Fort

Interparliamentary Relations

The Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker; Mr. Don Tannas, Deputy Speaker; Mr. Shiraz Shariff, Deputy Chair of Committees and the employees of the Legislative Assembly Office are involved in ongoing liaison with Members and employees of other parliaments and other representatives of foreign countries. In 2003, they hosted the following events and/or met with the following visitors:

January 29
Her Excellency Fanny Kertzman Yankelevitch
Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia

February 20
His Excellency Ki Ho Chang
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea

February 27
Minister Monika Hohlmeier
Minister of Culture and Learning
Free State of Bavaria

March 5
Mr. Robert Helfenstein
Consul General of Switzerland

March 11
His Excellency Wade Armstrong
High Commissioner for New Zealand

April 9
His Excellency Aydemir Erman
Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey

April 14
Her Excellency Shashi Uban Tripathi
High Commissioner for the Republic of India

April 24
His Excellency Denes Tomaj
Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary

April 30
Mrs. Binarti Fadjar Sumirat
Consul General of Indonesia

May 7
His Excellency Eric John Hayes
Ambassador of the European Commission

May 5
Mr. Joao Luis Laranjeira de Abreu
Consul General of Portugal

May 28
His Excellency Vladimir Kotzy
Ambassador of the Czech Republic

June 11
Mr. Raul Elias Chavera
Consul General of the United States

June 12
His Excellency Arnold Piggott
High Commissioner for the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago

August 19
Governor Francisco Ramirez Acuna
State of Jalisco, Mexico

October 15
His Excellency Suvidhya Simaskul
Ambassador of the Royal Thai Embassy

Mr. Surapit Kirtiputra
Consul General of the Royal Thai Consulate

November 17
Mr. Jiri Parkmann
Consul General of the Czech Republic

November 26
Dr. George Joseph
Consul General of India

December 1
Mr. Hans-Michael Schwandt
Consul General of Germany